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20. (New) The system according to claim 19, wherein:
the pulse width modulation ratio is 93%.

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- (New) The system according to claim 16, wherein:
the manipulated-variable calculation element computes the manipulated variable
as a non-linear function of the setpoint speed of the direct-current motor, and
the manipulated variable is fed, on the one hand, as an input to the commutation
shift element, and, on the other hand, to the commutation logic to adapt a current supply
to stator winding phases of the direct-current motor.

Remarks

This Preliminary Amendment cancels original claims 1 to 9, without prejudice, in the underlying PCT Application No. PCT/DE00/04008. The Preliminary Amendment also adds new claims 10-21. The new claims conform the claims to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules and do not add new matter to the application.

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b)(3), the Substitute Specification (including the Abstract, but without the claims) contains no new matter. The amendments reflected in the Substitute Specification (including Abstract) are to conform the Specification and Abstract to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules or to correct informalities. As required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b)(3)(iii) and § 1.125(b)(2), a Marked Up Version Of The Substitute Specification comparing the Specification of record and the Substitute Specification also accompanies this Preliminary Amendment. Approval and entry of the Substitute Specification (including Abstract) are respectfully requested.

The underlying PCT Application No. PCT/DE00/04008 includes an International Search Report, dated March 29, 2001, a copy of which is submitted herewith.

Applicants assert that the subject matter of the present application is new, non-obvious, and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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METHOD FOR SHIFTING THE INSTANT OF COMMUTATION FOR A SENSORLESS
AND BRUSHLESS DIRECT-CURRENT MOTOR AS WELL AS A SYSTEM FOR
IMPLEMENTING THE METHOD

Field Of The Invention

5 The present invention [starts out from] relates to a method for shifting the instant of
commutation for a sensorless and brushless direct-current motor whose stator windings are
fed by a multi-phase converter connection [according to the definition of the species in Claim
1 and also relates to a system for implementing this method according to Claim 6].

Background Information

10 DE] German Published Patent Application No. 39 40 568.9 [A1] describes a circuit
configuration for operating a multi-phase synchronous motor at a direct-current supply. In
this context, the phases are successively connected to the direct voltage and commutating
circuits corresponding to the rotor position are controlled in such a manner that they overlap
with respect to time for commutating subsequent phases, and at least one of the commutating
15 circuits in the commutation range is clocked in such a manner that the average value of the
current increases in the forward commutating phase and decreases in the reverse commutating
phase. As a result of this overlapping and clocking of the switching signals in the
commutation edges, there is less switching loss and a reduction in noise.

20 For sensorless and brushless direct-current motors, the instant of commutation is typically
determined by measuring the induced voltage in a particular non-current carrying stator
winding phase. In this context, this induced voltage is compared to a reference voltage that is
derived from the actual value of the rotational speed. In this connection, significant power
notches and ripples in the torque can occur, particularly in the case of large loads and high
25 motor speeds. This is extremely disadvantageous.

The object of the present invention is to provide a method that enables the instant of commutation to be shifted for a sensorless and brushless direct-current motor so as to prevent or significantly reduce the power notch, and decrease the torque ripple.

5 Summary [of the] Of The Invention

With respect to the related art, the method according to the present invention for shifting the instant of commutation for a sensorless and brushless direct-current motor [having the characteristic features of Claim 1] has the advantage of an increase in power with a constant magnetic circuit and identical motor mechanics, and of a reduction in the torque ripple by adapting the commutation threshold to an optimum current waveform. Advantageously, there is also no power notch observed, as is in the case of a commutation shift dependent on the measured motor speed.

In the method according to the present invention, this is principally achieved in that commutation is detected by comparing the voltage induced in a non-energized stator winding phase to a reference voltage, and in that the reference voltage is changed in dependence upon the setpoint value of the motor speed and/or the manipulated variable calculated therefrom.

[Advantageous further refinements and improvements of the method stated in Claim 1 are rendered possible by the measures specified in the additional method claims.]

According to a particularly advantageous and preferred specific embodiment of the method according to the present invention, the instant of commutation is shifted ahead with respect to time in such a manner that an optimum current waveform is achieved, i.e., optimum particularly with regard to an increase in power and/or a reduction in the torque ripple.

According to a particularly effective and advantageous embodiment and further refinement of the method according to the present invention, the instant of commutation is shifted in such a manner that the reference voltage is raised in the shape of a parabola.

In a further advantageous embodiment of this method feature, given a pulse width modulation

of the current supplied to the stator windings, the reference voltage is raised in the shape of a parabola, beginning at a pulse width modulation ratio of about 90 to 95%, in particular 93%. Raising the commutation threshold in the shape of a parabola has the advantage that it results in a smoother transition to the pre-commutation state.

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According to a further advantageous feature of an exemplary embodiment of the method according to the present invention, besides being used for changing the reference value for the instant of commutation, the manipulated variable determined in dependence upon the setpoint value of the rotational speed is also used for adapting the current supply to the individual stator winding phases, raising it or lowering it accordingly.

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A preferred system for implementing the above-explained method with its different modifications includes a sensorless and brushless direct-current motor that is fed by a multi-stage converter connection, which, for its part, includes an output stage control, a commutation logic, a phase selector, and a phase discriminator, and is characterized in that a commutation detection is provided which is supplied at one input by the phase selector with the instantaneous value of the voltage induced in a non-energized phase and, at a second input, with a reference voltage, for comparison, and in that the reference voltage can be changed by a commutation shift in accordance with a specific curve, a manipulated variable being supplied to the commutation shift by a manipulated-variable calculation as a function of the setpoint speed of the motor.

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In an advantageous embodiment of this system according to the present invention, it is provided that in the commutation shift, the reference voltage changes in accordance with a parabola, in particular, it is increased.

Given a pulse width modulation of the current supply to the individual stator winding phases of the motor, one advantageous embodiment of this system configuration provides that the reference voltage is increased in the shape of a parabola, starting from a pulse width modulation ratio of about 90 to 95%, preferably 93%. These percent values apply for a specific magnetic circuit design. Other designs of the magnetic circuit can result in significantly different values.

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In a further advantageous and particularly effective configuration of the system according to the present invention, calculating the manipulated variable yields, as a non-linear function of the setpoint speed of the motor, a manipulated variable that, on the one hand, is supplied to the commutation shift as an input, and, on the other hand, is supplied to the commutation logic for adapting the current supply to the stator winding phases of the motor.

Brief Description [of the] Of The Drawings [Drawing]

[The method according to the present invention and the system for implementing this method are more closely explained in the following description using an exemplary embodiment represented in the drawing. The figures show:]

Figure 1 shows a schematic block diagram for the commutation shift according to the present invention[;]

Figure 2 shows a diagram having the reference voltage as a function of the manipulated variable and/or the current in parabolic dependency[; and]

Figure 3 shows different diagrams of the voltage curve of the induced voltage in one phase and of the current energization of this phase, and three different current waveforms for different reference voltages and different motor speeds, in general, current waveforms for different commutation thresholds.

Detailed Description [of the Exemplary Embodiment]

In a block diagram, Figure 1 represents the commutation shift according to the present invention. A direct-current motor 1, which is sensorless and brushless, is fed by a multi-stage converter connection. For its part, this multi-stage converter connection, which can be three-phased and six-pulsed, for example, includes an output stage control 2, a commutation logic 3, a phase selector 4, a phase discriminator 5, as well as a commutation detection 6 as the main components. A MOSFET transistor 22 is symbolically represented in output stage control 2. The output stage control supplies motor 1 with energy via a multiple line 21.

Branching off of these lines, the respective instantaneous value of the voltage induced in a non-current-carrying phase is supplied via one multiple line 23, one of the, for example, six phases being selected in each case for this purpose by phase selector 4. This instantaneous value of the respective phase is transmitted by phase selector 4 via line 46 to a first input of commutation detection 6. A reference voltage U_{ref} , which is formed from adding the battery voltage supplied to motor 1 to the voltage from the commutation shift, is fed via line 47 to a second input of the commutation detection.

For its part, commutation shift 7 is supplied by a manipulated-variable calculation 8 via a line 87 with a manipulated variable U_{st} . Setpoint value $N_{setpoint}$ of the rotational speed of motor 1 is available as an input value via line 80 for manipulated-variable calculation 8. Manipulated variable U_{st} is determined in accordance with non-linear curve 81, which is represented in manipulated-variable calculation block 8, from this setpoint variable $N_{setpoint}$. This characteristic curve 81 is manipulated variable U_{st} , which is to be plotted over speed setpoint $N_{setpoint}$. Entered in block 7 of the commutation shift is a characteristic image in which manipulated variable U_{st} obtained in block 8 is plotted on the horizontal axis, and reference voltage U_{ref} is plotted on the vertical axis as a function thereof. The plotted characteristic curve 71 is preferably parabolic. The output value of manipulated-variable calculation 8 is fed via a line 83 to commutation logic 3 to increase the currents for output stage control 2 and the power transistors 22 contained therein, in correspondence with the predefined rotational speed $N_{setpoint}$ in the commutation logic, the currents then being supplied with the correct timing via lines 21 to motor 1.

The clock-pulse generation for commutation logic 3 is carried out by phase discriminator 5, which, as an input on line 65, generates the result of the comparison of reference voltage U_{ref} on line 47 and the instantaneous, phase-induced phase voltage on line 46 by comparator 61 in commutation detection 6. The output signal of phase discriminator 5, which is characterized by six different phases of pulse generation within block 5, is supplied via line 52 to commutation logic 3 and via line 54 to phase selector 4. As a result, phase selector 4 is adjusted to the correct phase for the commutation detection.

Figure 2 provides another larger and more exact view of the characteristic curve represented

in Figure 1 within commutation shift 7, in a slightly different shape. In this context, the percent value of the pulse width modulation is plotted on the horizontal axis, this corresponding to manipulated variable U_{st} for characteristic curve 71 within commutation shift 7 in Figure 1. Plotted on the vertical axis is reference voltage U_{ref} , which is supplied to commutation detection 6 via line 47. The parabolic characteristic curve of reference voltage U_{ref} begins to climb, namely in the shape of a parabola, starting at a pulse width modulation ratio of about 90%, especially 93%. This parabolic raising of the commutation threshold, i.e., of the reference voltage U_{ref} supplied via line 47, has the advantage that the transition to the pre-commutation state is smooth. Pre-commutation state means that the instant of commutation is advanced from its usual temporal state to an early start.

Figure 3 shows different diagrams and different current waveforms for different commutation thresholds. In the top diagram designated as A, voltage U_{ind} , which is induced in a phase U, for example, is plotted over the electrical angle. U_{bat} designates the battery voltage of a motor vehicle or the normal voltage of a direct-current vehicle electrical distribution system of a motor vehicle. U_{ref1} , which is below the battery voltage, designates a first reference voltage, and U_{ref2} designates a second reference voltage that is significantly above the value of battery voltage U_{bat} . One can assume that voltage reference value U_{ref1} approximately corresponds to the value 0.00 in Figure 2, and voltage reference value U_{ref2} in Figure 3, diagram A approximately corresponds to the value 1.00 of reference value U_{ref} in Figure 2.

In diagram B of Figure 3, I_U designates the on-time of the current for phase U. If commutation is performed to reference value U_{ref1} , the current and current waveform are plotted over time t in diagram C of Figure 3, the time corresponding, for this commutation threshold, to a setpoint speed of 1500 revolutions per minute, for example. Thus, current I_{115} approximates the current waveform that, together with the voltage induced in the same phase, causes the torque.

Plotted over time t in diagram D of Figure 3 is current waveform I_{130} , which ensues at a commutation threshold of voltage U_{ref1} in diagram A of Figure 3 and at a rotational speed of 3000 revolutions per minute. It is recognizable that the current can only slowly and weakly increase in this phase as a result of the winding inductance at hand.

Plotted over time t in diagram E of Figure 3 are the current and current waveform I_{230} , which ensues at a commutation threshold of U_{ref2} and at a rotational speed of 3000 revolutions per minute. It can be seen from the diagram that at the instant corresponding to voltage U_{ref1} in diagram A, current I_{230} is already built up to its full value, and, therefore, when the induced voltage increases, the full torque can be made immediately available for use.

In accordance with the present invention, the instant of commutation can change between those values that are between the points corresponding to commutation threshold U_{ref1} and U_{ref2} in diagram A. As a result of the temporal shift forward, commutation is correspondingly prematurely ended by the current being correspondingly switched off, as can be clearly seen from diagram E of Figure 3.

The function of the method according to the present invention and of the system according to the present invention is explained using the example of a air-conditioner fan motor for use in a motor vehicle. This is represented in detail in Figure 1-3 and was already extensively described above. In this context, it is important that in the case of such a blower, the load and, as such, the phase current increase quadratically with the rotational speed. Thus, for example, current I_{115} in diagram C at 1500 revolutions/minute has a value of 3 amperes. Given a commutation to threshold value U_{ref1} , this current at 3000 revolution/minute has a value of 18 amperes according to diagram D in Figure 3. It is recognizable from this representation that the shift of the commutation threshold [is necessary to] attains an optimum current waveform for all operating states, and, as such, a high torque in the case of a smaller torque ripple. Such an optimum current waveform is represented by current I_{230} in diagram E of Figure 3. As a result of such an optimum current waveform, the ohmic losses and the switching losses in the semiconductor circuit are kept as minimal as possible.

Due to the winding inductance, the phase current can only increase in a limited time. In the case of low rotational speeds, as is shown in diagram C of Figure 3 by current I_{115} , this effect is not significantly noticeable with respect to the function angle. First in the case of average to high rotational speeds of about 1500 to 3000 revolutions/minute, does the restricted current increase have a negative effect on the torque formation, the torque being $M = c\phi * I$, because at the instant the full, induced voltage is reached, $U_{ind} \approx c * \phi$, the phase current is not yet

built up. In diagram D of Figure 3, this is particularly represented by and readily recognizable from current I_{130} . Shifting the commutation threshold having a reference voltage U_{ref} that is greater than operating voltage U_{bat} , as shown in diagram A of Figure 3, results in the phase current having already adjusted itself to its maximum value upon reaching the full, induced voltage U_{ind} . As a result, the maximum torque can also be attained. The continuous increase in the commutation threshold having value U_{ref} starting from a defined setpoint speed enables the torque to be increased with constant motor mechanics.

Given drive systems having sensors attached, such an increase in torque is not possible due to the fixedly predefined position of the sensor. For sensorless drive systems that function using commutation shifting dependent on the actual value of the rotational speed, the disadvantage is that the commutation threshold is lowered in the case of a break of the speed due to a load increase. The resulting cancellation of the pre-commutation causes additional breaks in the rotational speed. This worsens the matter.

In contrast, the present invention in which the commutation shift is coupled to the speed setpoint ensures that this effect does not occur. The method according to the present invention and the system for its implementation according to the present invention advantageously provide a power increase with a constant magnetic circuit and identical motor mechanics, decrease the torque ripple, prevent power notches, and ensure a smooth transition to the pre-commutation state by increasing the commutation threshold in the shape of a parabola. This is then particularly advantageous when the motor is used for application as a fan in motor vehicles, where the fan load increases quadratically with the rotational speed. In this case, the parabolic commutation shift is particularly advantageous for the smooth load transition.

Abstract Of The Disclosure

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A [The present invention provides a] method for shifting the instant of commutation for a sensorless and brushless direct-current motor[(1)], whose stator windings are fed by a multi-phase converter connection. The converter connection includes an output stage control[(2)], a commutation logic[(3)], a phase selector[(4)], and phase discriminator[(5)]. A commutation detection [(6)] is supplied at one input [(46)] with the instantaneous value of the voltage induced in a phase, the instantaneous value being determined by the phase selector, and at a second input[(47)], with a reference voltage [(Uref)] for comparison. The reference voltage [(Uref)] can be changed by a commutation shift [(7)] in correspondence with a specific characteristic curve[(71)]. A manipulated variable [(Ust)] is supplied by a manipulated-variable calculation [(8)] to the commutation shift [(7)] as a function of the setpoint speed [(Nsetpoint)] of the motor. The commutation shift takes place in an advantageous manner in a parabola shape. As a result of the setpoint value-dependent commutation shift, a high torque is provided also in the case of high rotational speeds and a heavy load, and the torque ripple is kept to a minimum.

[(Figure 1 for publication).]